

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,102,709 to *Howard et al.*

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Howard et al.* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,037,787 to *Corwith*.

The Office Action objects to the Foreign Priority Date.

The Figures 8, 9A, and 9B stand objected as illustrating that which is old without a “Prior Art” designation.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Applicants have submitted an Information Disclosure Statement concurrently herewith.

Applicants have amended claim 1. No new matter has been introduced.

Applicants have respectfully traversed all rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103.

Applicants have respectfully requested that the Office clarify the objection to the Foreign Priority Date.

A Submission of Replacement Drawings has been filed concurrently herewith to substitute for the originally filed Figs. 8, 9A, and 9B.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants have submitted an Information Disclosure Statement concurrently herewith. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledge the Information Disclosure Statement by initialing the PTO 1449 form and returning a copy to Applicants.

Objection to the Foreign Priority Date

The Office Action of April 27, 2006 (hereinafter, "Office Action") objects to the Foreign Priority Date. Specifically, the Office Action alleges that "the proper Foreign Priority Date should be Japan P2003-121573 04/25/2003 instead of Japan P2003-121574." (*See* Paragraph 2). Applicants believe that Foreign Priority has been properly claimed to Japanese Patent Application No. P2003-121574, and respectfully request further explanation as to the basis of this objection, or alternatively that the objection be withdrawn.

Objection to the Drawings

To overcome the Office Action's objection of the drawings, Applicants concurrently file herewith a Submission of Replacement Drawings with one (1) sheet of replacement drawings to substitute for the original filed drawing sheets. Figs. 8, 9A, and 9B (on sheet 7) are labeled as "Related Art". Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

ALL CLAIMS RECITE ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Howard et al.* Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for at least the following reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action has not established that *Howard et al.* anticipates each and every feature of the Applicants' claimed invention and that all rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn. Independent claim 1 recites, in part, a conductive pipe. At least this feature is not disclosed or taught by *Howard et al.*

The Office Action alleges that *Howard et al.* discloses a conductive pipe. (See Paragraph 5). Applicants respectfully disagree. In contrast to claim 1, *Howard et al.* discloses a pin 90, not a conductive pipe. (See col. 2, lines 62-65). Further, should the Office attempt to construe element 70, element 80, or a combination thereof as a conductive pipe, Applicants note that body members 70 and 80 are each fabricated of a dielectric material (i.e., a nonconductive material).

As pointed out in MPEP § 2131, a claim is anticipated by a prior art reference only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) should be withdrawn because *Howard et al.* does not teach or suggest each feature of independent claim 1. Additionally, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 2-7 are also allowable insofar as they recite the combination of features recited in claim 1, as well as reciting additional features that further distinguish over the applied prior art.

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Howard et al.* in view of *Corwith*. *Corwith* does not cure the deficiencies of *Howard et al.* Accordingly, claim 8 is allowable insofar as it recites the combination of features recited in claim 1, as well as reciting additional features that further distinguish over the applied prior art.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant's respectfully requests reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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